

100th ANNIVERSARY  
1884-1984  
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH



ASTORIA, OREGON





# HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

33rd & Grand  
Astoria, Oregon

*Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands!  
Serve the Lord with gladness!  
Come into His presence with singing!*

*Know that the Lord is God!  
It is He that made us, and we are His;  
We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.*

*Enter His gates with thanksgiving,  
and His courts with praise!  
Give thanks to Him, bless His name!*

*For the Lord is good;  
His steadfast love endures for ever,  
and His faithfulness to all generations.*

*Psalm 100*



*"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him; rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."*

— Colossians 2:6,7

# **Pastors, Interns and Lay Assistants who have served at FIRST LUTHERAN**

## **Pastors:**

Emil Christensen .....	1877-79
Ellefson, Bull, Carson, Hoikka .....	
H. Engh .....	1884
Hove .....	1890
Leverson .....	1891
Nissen .....	1893
Tonnesen .....	1894-96
O.M. Holden .....	1897-1904
H.W. Sorenson & Rev. Aaberg .....	1904-1906
T. Neste .....	1906-21
C. Losen .....	1921-27
M.A. Christensen .....	1927-36
T. Gulhaugen .....	1936-48
H. Storaasli .....	1948-63
R. Martinson .....	1963-70
A. Strandjord .....	1971-79
C. Johnson .....	1980-

## **Interns:**

Rory Scott .....	1974-75
Cyndi Ganzkow .....	1975-76
Craig Wanamaker .....	1976-77
Jerry Brown .....	1977-78
Michael Hanson .....	1978-79
Richard Pearson .....	1979-80

## **Lay Assistants**

Becky Leschensky .....	1981-82
Paul Sarff .....	1982-





A Lutheran church in Astoria was dreamed of by the Norwegian immigrants early in the 1870's but attempts to organize met with little success until 1876.

The entire population of the town did not exceed 2000. Few of the people were Scandinavians. Upper Astoria consisted of a handful of houses, located mostly in the two blocks between Thirty-first and Thirty-fourth Streets and scattered along the river bank. The only means of getting down town was by boat. Streets were unknown. The one occupation of the men was fishing in small sailing boats on the Columbia River. Nearly twenty fish canneries were strung along the shore.

Colonel John Adair, who had received a donation land claim from the government, had laid out a townsite separate from the rest of Astoria and organized a city government. He called this the Port of Upper Astoria and it is still recorded in the county books under this name. It was here that Colonel Adair established the first U. S. custom house in the Pacific Northwest.

In 1876 the Norwegian Lutheran Synod of America sent Reverend and Mrs. Emil Christensen and their family out west to help in the development of the Lutheran church on the coast. As a young man the Rev. Mr. Christensen had been the first permanent pastor in the Dakotas where he had served since 1867. It took them eight days and nine nights by train from Omaha to Sacramento. San Francisco did not have trains at that time. From San Francisco they took the steamer Ajax to Portland, where they stayed a while before coming to Astoria.

They built their home here, a part of their home still stands as part of another house at 1634 Grand Avenue. This was the center of our church activities in the far west. Reverend Christensen was the only minister of our synod north of San Francisco and west of the Rocky Mountains. He held services here about once a month, dividing the rest of his time among the various parts of the Pacific Northwest.

On January 27, 1877, the Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran congregation was organized. Those who signed up as members at the first meeting were: Bernhart Borgesen, Gilbert Christiansen, Mads Knutsen, Tobias Brude, Amund Monsen, Cato Parelius and Ole Garnos. Brude was elected chairman and Reverend Christensen, secretary. Reverend Christensen was unanimously elected to serve as pastor for the congregation. Some of those who later signed up as members were: Aug. Olson, John Lawson, Gust Holmes, Jens Jacobson, F.L. Blichfeldt, Edvard Espensen, O.K. Melby, Zacharias M. Christensen, Martin Peterson, John A. M. Josephson, Lars Anderson Oigaard, Solvfest Anderson, Arne Olsen, Niels Nielsen, L. Hagen, Oluf Pedersen.

Lutheran services were first held in the Episcopal Chapel, located on the upper side of Grand Avenue between Thirty-first and Thirty-third streets. Later the congregation was allowed the use of a school house, where now stands the garage on the Collins property on Thirty-fourth Street. After that they were together with the Swedes in their church on Franklin Avenue near the corner of Thirty-fourth Street. In 1879 Reverend Christensen was ordered by the Synod to take up work in the Gennese Valley in Idaho. Two ministers, Reverend Ellefson and Reverend Bull, were here from time to time. Reverend Carlson and a Reverend Hoikka, evidently from another synod, also served. From all reports and records this was the end of the Scandinavian Lutheran congregation in Astoria. The secretary's last entry states that in as much as they had "no minister and no members remaining it was deemed advisable to terminate the congregation."

During Reverend Christiansen's stay we find the names of many men and women whom he baptized. A few of them are: Caroline Young, Carl Knutsen, Tobias Walter Christensen, a son of the Rev. and Mrs. Emil Christensen, and Jasper Albert Pedersen, son of Oluf Pedersen. Mr. Pedersen's name is also listed among the communicants of November 11, 1877, and he was a member until his death in more recent years.





*Reverend Emil Christensen*  
1877-1879



In a pamphlet, written by Mrs. Emil Christensen during the last years of her life she wrote:

"It may be of interest to my Astoria friends to know that we started the first Trust and Savings Bank in Upper Astoria. It was right in our home and was "trust and savings" in the true sense of the words. Trust was the feeling the depositors had toward us, a confidence we much appreciated, and the savings were the small earnings of the fishermen, which they placed with us for safekeeping.

"I took care of the vault, which was a small walnut box that was kept in my Dakota dresser. I kept the key. The bank rules were: Each depositor had his roll of bills wrapped carefully in paper with his name and the amount contained written on the roll. The other rule was silence.

"I also, want to tell you of my dearest memory picture from Astoria. It is of the light house on the opposite side of the Columbia River, at Fort Canby. This light could be plainly seen from my window, and I shall never forget the comfort I took many a dark, dreary, rainy evening, watching the never-failing light over there. The darker the night the brighter it shone, and I felt that when anything taken care of by human hands could prove so faithful, how could our hearts give room for any doubt in our Heavenly Father keeping His promises. 'Commit thy ways unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.'"

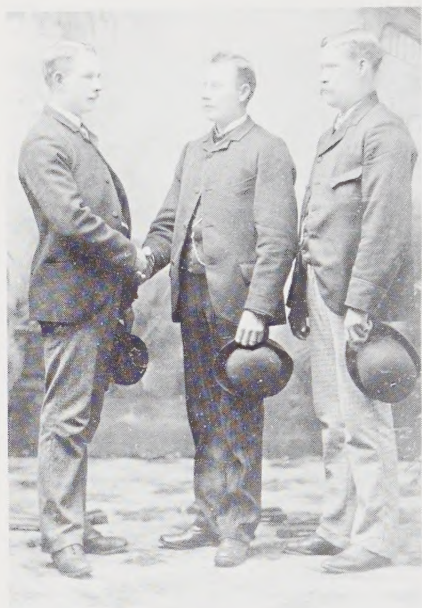
It is interesting to note from the history of Astoria during this period that an agreement was reached by Colonel John Adair, John Shively, John McClure and the other settlers whereby the governments of Astoria and the Port of Upper Astoria were united. In 1882 a planked roadway following the present Franklin Avenue and continuing along the Scow Bay shoreline was built, thus linking the two sections of town. D. H. Welch brought suit several times against the city for building this road on what he believed to be his private property.

On the 7th day of September, 1884, a meeting was held for the purpose of organizing a Norwegian Lutheran congregation. Present were Reverend Engh, A. T. Brakke, the Settem brothers, Peder Brown, Berg Helgesen, Kristensen and Halvor Bjeldenes. They organized and called themselves the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran congregation of Astoria, and on October 2, 1884, the articles of incorporation were formally adopted. It seems strange that not one of the former members were mentioned as being along in this organization. The congregation has existed continuously through the years since that date.

Rev. Hagbart Engh, who came here from Portland, called the ladies together that same fall and they organized a Kvindeforening. Mrs. A. T. Brakke was the first president. Their first plans were for an auction, which was held at the home of Mrs. L. G. Haaven, a sum of \$14 was realized. This money was used to purchase material for a bazaar. Among the charter members were Mrs. P.H. Johnson, Mrs. Jens Nielsen, and Mrs. B.J. Settem who all gave long lives of faithful service in the church. In 1934 the Ladies Aid recognized them by presenting to each a Life Membership in the Women's Missionary Federation.

During the next 14 years the congregation was served by a number of pastors: Rev. Hagbart Engh served in 1884, Rev. Hove or Haave in 1890, Rev. Levorsen in 1891, Rev. Nissen in 1893 and Rev. Tonnesen 1894-96. Some of those who joined the congregation were: Mrs. Randi Olson, Theodor Siverson, Adolph Siverson, Erik Hauke, Lars Torvik, Jens Nielsen, Knud Sater, and Theodore Fredricksen.

One of the above pastors was granted a leave of absence to go east, but he stayed away too long. When he returned to his home in Scow Bay, a pastor from the Conference had taken possession. There was then much dissension and misunderstanding and strife. As elsewhere, a flock divided against itself must necessarily suffer. The chapel on Franklin had been sold to the Free Church. Meetings were held in the buildings of the West Coast Canning Company, Clatsop Mills, or the IXL Cannery.



*Early day members of Norwegian Lutheran Church. First President of the congregation was Henry Petersen — the man in the center. Left: Iofus Jensen. Right: Mr. Wickman.*



*Charter members of the Ladies Aid: Mrs. Jens Nielsen, Mrs. P.H. Johnson, Mrs. B.J. Settem.*



The congregation looked for a proper building site and in 1888 acquired property at 29th and Grand Avenue. On May 8, 1893, the new church was used for the first time. Rev. Nissen was serving at that time. The congregation rejoiced that they were at last able to worship in their own building. The lumber for the church was carried up the hill on the backs of the men. They first built where the parsonage later was erected, a plain chapel without tower or basement. In 1900 the lower part of the lot was graded, and the edifice moved. The basement, tower and back part that contained the altar were then added to give its completed appearance for the next half century.

In December of 1897, Rev. O.M. Holden arrived; and to his tireless and earnest endeavor we owe to a great extent for the splendid foundation for our later church work. He organized the Sunday School, started the church choir, and added ladies' organizations to the church. Unfortunately he contracted a serious disease and had to give up his call after six or seven years.

Rev. H.W. Sorenson served the congregation briefly; he was relieved by Rev. Aaberg, and later Rev. Sorenson returned to finish his service. During his day a parsonage was built, the church was moved, the streets were graded and other improvements were made.

In 1906 the congregation called Rev. T.P. Neste, and during his long stay of 15 years, a continued and happy progress was made in membership, in increased general activities of the church, and in steady improvement of the church property. The Ladies Aid assumed the \$1700 debt on the parsonage and paid it. The Girls' and Boys' league, also, one and sometimes two church choruses functioned. The gallery was built; the altar and altar painting, baptismal font, carpet on the floor, and the bell all were purchased in these years.

Times were now more prosperous, and the work advanced steadily. Industries had increased the pay rolls and attracted many to the community. Astoria was at its zenith as far as city life went.

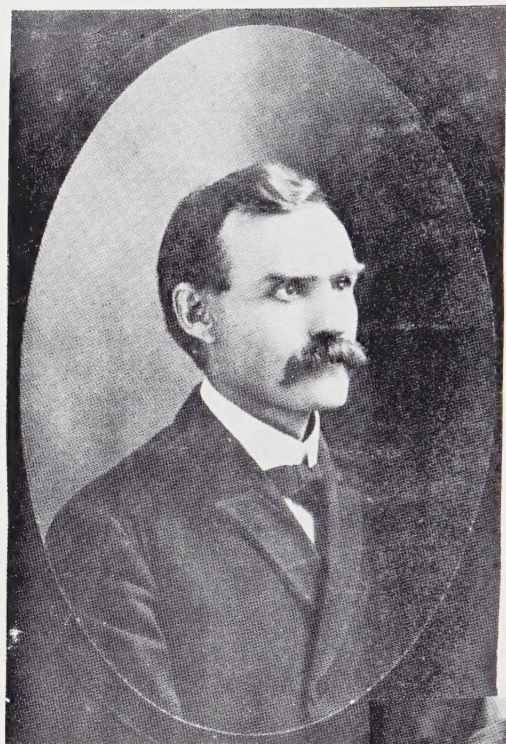
When, in 1919, the Women's Missionary Federation of the NLCA was organized at Tacoma, Washington, the local Kvindeforening sent delegates and thus became charter members. This is the oldest Ladies Aid in our church on the Pacific Coast. Mrs. M.A. Christensen, whose husband later served the Astoria church, was the first Pacific District president of the Federation and Mrs. T.P. Neste, pastor's wife here at the time, was elected first Oregon Circuit president.

A fire destroyed the Hammond mill, located in Alderbrook, and when the company decided to move to Garibaldi rather than rebuild here, many of our people moved out of town.

A great many of the congregation were fishermen. Columbia River salmon was one of the leading commercial industries, and now, fishing, also, was not up to the prosperous seasons of former years. Many who had built their homes and were owners of boats and fishing outfits transferred their activities to Alaskan waters or became trollers in the Pacific Ocean.

Until 1906 all church services and other activities had been carried on in the Norwegian language. Some of the American born were turning elsewhere to worship in English. Those coming from homes across the sea insisted on services in the "mother tongue" while those born here wanted the language of this country. Reverend Neste began the practice of preaching in English one Sunday a month shortly after arriving here. Later pastors preached every other Sunday in English. About 1940 Reverend Gulhaugen cut this down to one Sunday of Norwegian a month and then gradually dropped that until our services were all carried on in English. We now have many faithful members who are Scandinavian or those of Norwegian extraction who speak only English.

Reverend and Mrs. Neste accepted a call to Spokane, Washington in 1921 and that same year Reverend and Mrs. Carl Losen became their successors.



*Reverend O.M. Holden, 1897*



*Reverend and Mrs. Theo. P. Neste, 1906-1921.*



They had not lived here long when a terrible fire broke out in a restaurant down town. Due to the fact that the city was built over the water on wooden pilings it was impossible to get it under control. Fire swept through the pilings, from building to building until almost the entire business section was reduced to ashes. This was the largest fire, to date, in the Northwest. Many were unable to rebuild their businesses. The city suffered not only a great monetary loss but also a loss of one fourth of its population who were forced to move to other locations. This, of course, was reflected in the affairs of the church.

In October of 1922 fifteen girls met with their advisors, Mrs. Anton Kvistad and Mrs. Carl Losen and started the Girls' Guild. Their first officers were Madeline Rasmussen (Mrs. Carl Kvistad), president; Ruby Olson (Heikkala), vice-president; Olga Hauke (Mrs. Joe Henningsen), secretary; and Grace Rasmussen (Mrs. Frank Johnson), treasurer. This group has continued as an auxiliary society of the church, known today as the Senior Guild.

During the five years the Losens were in Astoria additional work was done on the church. Plastering, painting, new furnace, new light fixtures, and a new foundation were completed.

In 1927, health reasons made it necessary for the Losens to move back to the midwest where he served 32 years as pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Decorah, Iowa. He also served on the Board of Regents of Luther College and of the Aase Haugen Home besides holding various district offices. Rev. Losen died from a fatal coronary occlusion July 17, 1951, at age 52 years. Mrs. Losen died June 1, 1958. Their children, Phyllis Stoskopf, Lois Williams, Evelyn Hayes and Carl Jr. have led productive Christian family lives.



*The Old Church*



*Reverend and Mrs. Carl Losen 1921-1927*



*The Losen children, Phyllis Stoskopf, Lois Williams, Evelyn Hayes and Carl Jr. have led productive Christian family lives.*



In 1927 Rev. M.A. Christensen accepted the call to the church where his honored father and mother had labored as pioneers. During his first year he started home mission work by conducting a Sunday School and confirmation class in Fernhill.

He, also, organized the first Junior Choir of about fifteen members in 1927. This choir was led by him and later continued by his daughter, Mrs. Theodore Gulhaugen, when her husband was called here. Mrs. Gulhaugen first directed a sextet and later expanded it into a full choir. They sang for church services once a month and put on an annual concert each spring. Offerings from these concerts were given to start a "Door Fund" for a new church. This was one of the first moves to start people thinking about the necessity for a new church. The Sunday School later continued this project and contributed certain finishings to the building. The Junior Choir, led by different lay persons has continued in existence to the present time. When this was written there were over twenty girls and boys in the group, who, led by Mr. Bjarne Thomassen, having sung all year at each church service.

In 1932 the Sunday School superintendent, Mrs. M.A. Christensen, decided that the school had increased in size until it needed to be divided into two divisions. The primary department was organized by Mrs. F.M. Christensen who was assisted by some of the high school girls of the church. Our Sunday School had grown and some one who saw the children pouring out of the building Sunday morning remarked, "We have a children's church." We had classes from three years old through high school and an adult class that was taught by the minister. Every inch of the old church was used and four classes met in the parsonage. In the 30's all but about four teachers were young girls. These young girls were later replaced by a trained adult staff of twenty teachers. Each month the twenty teachers met to conduct the business of the school and to study. The Sunday School was self-supporting and made it a practice to send large offerings from Christmas and Easter to Lutheran World Action and other missionary causes. Beginning in 1948, white Bibles were given for perfect attendance and additional prizes were given for more years of perfect records. A large percentage of the Sunday School owned white Bibles. The average Sunday School attendance was 200. Sunday School continued for nine months and a Children's Church was conducted each Sunday during the summer. An Annual Church picnic was sponsored by the children.

The Girls' Guild, by 1932, had grown so large and with such a wide variance of ages that it was thought best to divide it into two groups. The original members and all others over twenty one years of age, were formed into the Senior Guild. The younger girls organized a Junior Guild. Later, when the Lutheran Daughters of the Reformation was organized in the NLCA they became a local chapter. Mrs. Anton Kvistad was their first adviser. Olga Henningsen and Nora Bue were, also, advisers. They continued in existence until 1943 when lack of interest among the younger girls caused them to disband.

One of the missionary efforts of 1935 causes us to chuckle as it is recalled. During the summer a Christmas box was packed by the Ladies Aid for our Alaska Mission. We had been requested to wrap all parcels separately. The committee packed the packages that had been left in the church kitchen and mailed them. When fall activities commenced the Ladies' Aid dish towels and the Senior Guild's new tablecloths could not be found. Every one tried to locate them. Finally it was decided that the men who had painted the church that summer had used them for "painting rags."

When a "Thank you" letter finally arrived from Rev. Elmer Dahle, Shismareff, Alaska, it included these words: "Why have not other organizations thought that we here at the outposts of Missions might enjoys stacks of dishtowels and beautiful tablecloths." Our towels and tablecloths, still wrapped as they had come from the laundry and left on the kitchen table, had been erroneously included in the box for Alaska. No one regretted the unplanned gifts.



*Reverend and Mrs. M.A. Christensen  
1927-1936*

*Reverend Christensen died April 7, 1937, in Parkland, Washington and Mrs. Christensen died in 1953 at Eugene, Oregon.*



We remember the early thirties as bad depression years, when there was little work or money, but people had time to visit. The minister's salary was \$900 a year and some months he wasn't paid. Ladies Aid contributions to the church dropped from \$700 to \$175 on their lowest year.

Reverend Christensen was forced to retire from the ministry in 1936 by ill health and was succeeded in Astoria by his son-in-law, Rev. Theodore Gulhaugen.

During Reverend Gulhaugen's stay, the kitchen was enlarged and remodeled through the combined efforts of the Ladies' Aid and the Senior Guild; an inside stairway was built to the church nave; the parsonage was improved by digging and putting in a concrete basement; a furnace was added; a kitchen and breakfast room was added; and a partition was taken from between the living and dining room.

Astoria was again becoming a prosperous city as tuna and shark liver fishing were developed for the trollers. Tongue Point, which had previously been given to the government for a naval base, but up until then had not been developed, was activated. The willow-covered picnic ground where we had held Sunday School picnics was graded, paved and became an airport. Much building and development made additional jobs. Houses and apartments that had stood idle were filled. The navy had come to Astoria. New people came to our church, some for brief stays, other to remain permanently.

In 1940 Norway was invaded. This was sad for many of our people who had been raised in "the old country." The Ladies Aid voted to cut down on their Aid refreshments and to ask the hostesses to give the difference to "Norway Relief." Much sewing and knitting was done to send across the seas. A prayer service was held for the people of Norway in commemoration of the first invasion anniversary.

Pearl Harbor! We were at war. Our women now turned to Red Cross work. Astoria was blacked out. Fort Stevens was the only point in the country that was fired on. It was shelled by a Japanese submarine but no damage was done. We were in a danger area and the town prepared for emergency. Our women stood in readiness for mass feeding, in the church, if necessary. Letters were sent once a month to all men whose star appeared on our service flag. A candle was lighted on the altar for each service man in a special prayer service for their safety. When rationing came, adequate points were given for church affairs. A Lutheran Service Center was established by united effort of all Lutheran bodies. Our ladies, with other Lutheran women of the city, took turns at serving home-made food and coffee and acting as hostesses for the men. We also helped serve at the USO. When our boys returned home, each was presented with a hymn book by the Aid and Guild.



*Rev. and Mrs. Ted Gulhaugen and family*

The Building Fund! The first contribution toward the new building was given by Mrs. P. H. Johnson, who willed it to the church. Other gifts were given as memorials by relatives and friends. The 1945 records of the Ladies Aid show that money earned by the women and \$50 received from sale of a crocheted bedspread by Mrs. M.A. Christensen was given to the fund. That fall the first of many united efforts of the Ladies Aid and Guild, a bazaar, was given and netted \$1,025. Each year thereafter joint bazaars were held with the Alderbrook Guild, now organized and doing their share. Led first by the untiring efforts of the women of the church, the people gradually got behind the drive to raise money to build. Pledges were made and regular or special-occasion contributions given.

The Alderbrook Guild was organized on January 25, 1945, with Mrs. Joe Peschl, president; Thelma Walthers, Secretary-Treasurer; and a total membership of five members. This group has as their special project children's work in the church. They made babies and children's clothes and toys for the bazaars, sponsored vacation Bible School, entertained the Junior Choir, helped the Luther League and made towels, embroidered with the church's name, to be given to each baby baptized. Their number grew until they were as large as the Senior Guild, and took their part in all women's activities.

The year of 1947 marked the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the church. At the morning service, gifts were laid on the altar for the Building Fund. A pot-luck dinner was served after the service.

The Couples Club was organized on June 13, 1947. There were eight couples present and Robert Prepula was elected president. Myron Bue, vice-president and Hazel Henningsen secretary-treasurer. This group was made up of the younger married couples of the congregation. One of their largest projects was the purchase a movie machine with sound track. They earned money for this by paper drives and by selling memorial plates of the church on 29th and Grand.

Reverend and Mrs. Gulhaugen left the Astoria church early in 1948 to accept a call to North Sacramento, California. Mrs. Gulhaugen died in June, 1966, in Parkland, Washington.



*This picture was taken on Pastor Ted's 90th birthday. Kathy Clare, Pastor Gulhaugen, Rumohr Gamm, Theodora Mebust, Martin Gulhaugen, Grace Elaine LeBar.*



For our kick-off Sunday, January 8, 1984, we were honored to have Pastor Theodore Gulhaugen as our guest, along with his son, Pastor Martin Gulhaugen. The following autobiography was written for Ted's 90th birthday celebration in 1983.

Theodore Gulhaugen was born August 21, 1893, in Drammen, Norway. He looked very sickly. His good Lutheran parents, concerned the boy would not live very long, called the parish pastor, who rowed over to the island where the family lived, and baptized him. Theodore not only survived, but grew stronger, due not least to a long daily walk across a rail bridge off the island, and thence two miles to school.

In February of 1911 he came to the United States, settling in Seattle, where his brother, Lauris worked in a sawmill. Ever a learner, Ted yearned to go from the Ballard area to that other "Little Norway", Decorah, Iowa, and attend Luther College. The distance to Parkland, however, was much shorter, so in 1915, he enrolled at Pacific Lutheran Academy. In 1916, the mission board of the Norwegian Synod called this young immigrant to make yet another big move and go to Alaska to serve the Eskimos. "I was not used to saying 'No' to the church" he explained when asked why such a young student would accept that distant responsibility. He served Teller Mission and Mary's Igloo (!) on the Seward Peninsula . . . working at a school for Eskimo children, and at both missions.

In 1917 Ted returned and attended the seminary in Red Wing, Minnesota. In 1918 he entered Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, graduating in 1921. He was ordained that year and was called by the Mission Board of the Pacific District. He first lived in Kennewick, and served 4 congregations in the Yakima Valley. In 1926 he moved to New Westminster, B.C. and served 2 congregations there. In the depths of the Great Depression he moved to South Bend, Washington, serving the congregation there and in Raymond. Without regrets, certainly not seeking any sympathy, Ted remembers that he walked between those towns, not being able to afford an automobile in 1930. In 1936 he became pastor in Astoria, Oregon, but also served Puget Island and Chinook, Washington, from there. In 1948 he became pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church in North Sacramento, California. This was the first time in his ministry that he served a "one point" parish. While in Sacramento, he took part in the establishing of California Lutheran College at Thousand Oaks. While in Astoria, it was Pastor Gulhaugen who first had the vision of the need of a larger church and started raising funds. The Sunday School children saved "extra" pennies and nickels for the door fund of the new church.

Pastor Gulhaugen retired from full ministry in 1962, and accepted the call to become visitation pastor at Trinity, Parkland, Washington. His kind words and friendly presence in the church and community have brought strength and joy to young and old. He still conducts an adult Bible class, and organizes senior citizen meetings at Trinity.

Being student, missionary, preacher, teacher, pastor — these roles have not overshadowed his calling as husband and father. In 1921 he married Gertrude Christensen. She died in 1966. The five children continue to be a happy part of Ted's life. Martin is pastor of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Tacoma. Grace Elaine (Mrs. L.E. LaBar) lives in Vineland, New Jersey. Rumohr Gamm lives in Minneapolis; Kathryn (Mrs. Richard Clare) in Redding, California. Teddi (Mrs. Leland Mebust) is in New Freedom, Pennsylvania. This extended family has 20 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Pastor Martin Gulhaugen went to Astoria schools and is the only son of our congregation to enter the ministry. He brought the message on our first celebration Sunday.

Martin R. Gulhaugen was born August 1, 1923, in Yakima, Washington, to Theodore and Gertrude Gulhaugen. After his fathers pastorates in New Westminster, Canada, South Bend and Raymond, Washington, the family came to Astoria, Oregon to serve First Lutheran. After graduating from Astoria High School, he attended Pacific Lutheran College, graduating in 1948. He served two and a half years in the Field Artillery (European Theater) during the Second World War, graduated from Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1951. He has served congregations in Red Lodge, Montana; The Nashua Parish (Nashua, Fort Peck, Frazer and Grain Bethel); Our Saviour's at Clarkston, Washington and Gloria Dei in Tacoma, Washington since December, 1972.

On September 3, 1949, in Eugene, Oregon, he was united in marriage to Noreen Skilbred. To this union four sons were born: Theodore, Chris, Bertram and John. It might be noted that Theodore (Ted) was ordained into the pastoral ministry in 1979, Chris and Bert are musicians, and John is a student at Luther College.

As a part of this, I would like to say "Thank you" for the privilege of sharing, together with my father, in your celebration of 100 years of service in Astoria.



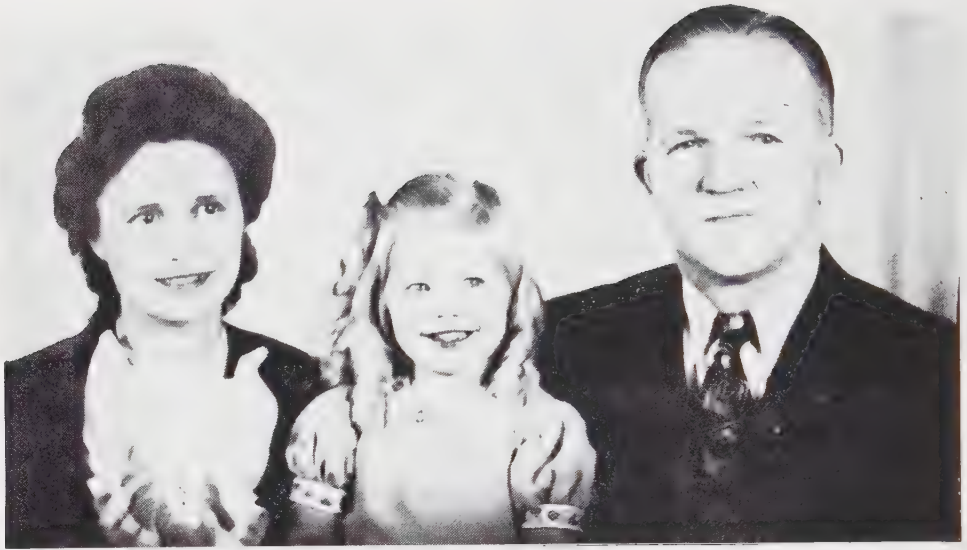
*Pastor Theodore Gulhaugen and Pastor Martin Gulhaugen.*





*Reverend and Mrs. Leonard Kutz—1948*

When Reverend and Mrs. Gulhaugen left the Astoria church early in 1948, we were fortunate in securing the services of Reverend Leonard Kutz of the Missouri Synod, who was the Director of the Lutheran Service Center at the time, as a fill-in pastor. He conducted services and confirmed the class in June. When the Service Center was closed Reverend Kutz accepted a call in his own synod near Portland.



*Reverend and Mrs. H. Storaasli and Joanne. 1948-1963.*

Reverend and Mrs. Hjalmer Storaasli and daughter Joanne came to us in November of 1948 from Mt. Vernon, Washington. Reverend Storaasli had served, not only as pastor, but also as chairman of the Building Committee throughout our building program.

During Reverend Storaasli's stay with us the work progressed, the membership increased, plans submitted by E. Isaacson, architect, accepted, a lot bought, cleared and excavated and the building erected. By the end of 1952 we were able to say that all property, excavating, first contract for exterior of the building, plumbing, windows, etc. were practically done and paid for and the work on the interior was progressing with our men donating the labor. The Building Committee, with members representing all organizations of the church, worked on planning, guiding, and co-ordinating these efforts under the faithful, untiring leadership of Reverend Storaasli. So much of labor, time and money was contributed that it is impossible to give credit to all. Each in his own way "let his light so shine" and contributed his "good works" to the "glorifying the Father which art in heaven." We have built together, not an edifice of cement and wood, but a House of the Lord.

In 1949 the Norwegian was finally taken from our official church title and we have since been known as the First Lutheran Church of Astoria, Oregon.

On June 15, 1950, eleven men organized a Brotherhood. Their first officers were Kenneth Wolz, president; Ferdinand Christensen, vice-president; and Kenneth Berg, secretary-treasurer. Previous attempts had been made to have a brotherhood but without too much success. This time the men decided on having dinner meetings and asked the three ladies' groups to take turns in serving them. This was done with an occasional potluck meeting for families. At the second meeting of the group Mr. Wolz announced that he was resigning as he was moving from town and Mr. Christensen finished the year as president. About thirty men attended the monthly dinners and their main contribution was the help they gave in the actual building of the new church. The many hours of labor saved much money in the cost of building.

The Brotherhood continues to have dinner meetings the fourth Thursday of the month. Until about five years ago the women of the different organizations cooked the dinners. Since that time the men and their wives have taken turns doing the cooking. Members of the Brotherhood take care of much of the church properties. They have recently oiled the roof and painted the adjoining parsonage which is now the home of our lay assistant.



The Women's Missionary Federation was formed by all of the women of our church on June 20, 1951. Until this date our three ladies auxiliary groups had all belonged to the WMF, carrying on separately the various missionary projects of the federation and making separate reports to the Circuit and District bodies. Now, our women, who had worked together on bazaars, rummage sales and other money-making ideas, felt that all women members of the church, whether they were in other societies or not should be united in the Missionary Federation work. It was with joyful hearts that old and young united in His Name to promote and stimulate love for the great mission of the church; making all nations disciples of Jesus Christ and to disseminate knowledge of, and to aid prayerfully and financially the activities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, with special emphasis upon its missionary program; and to support the local congregation and its activities.

Mrs. Joe Henningsen, the first president, is credited by the women as being the one whose leadership, untiring effort, and prayers brought this union to pass. Her supporting officers were Miss Frances Gustafson, vice-president; Mrs. O. Wrausmann, secretary; and Mrs. Robert Paschall, treasurer.

In 1961 this organization became the First Lutheran Church Women and now meet the first Tuesday of each month. These are luncheon meetings continuing in Christian fellowship and support of church functions.

On January 25, 1952, after appropriate prayers and ceremonies, the cornerstone of the new church home of the First Lutheran Church was laid by our Pacific District President, Dr. H.L. Foss. Behind that cornerstone, hermetically sealed in a copper box given by Mr. Arne Abrahamson, are two copies of the Bible, one in English and one in Norwegian; the history of the church; the constitution of the church; the catechism; a hymn book; minutes of the last congregational meeting; a listing of those in command of our civil government and of our church government from national to local; and signatures of our present church officers.

The last service in the old church at 29th and Grand was held April 4, 1954, to bid farewell to a building constructed in the 1880's.

On Palm Sunday, April 10, 1954, the first service was held in our new church. The congregation met at the 29th street church and joyfully walked in procession to the new church for the service.

On Sunday, September 26, 1954, 500 people attended the dedication services when Dr. H.L. Foss, president of the Pacific District, delivered the dedication sermon. The following is from the Consecration of that service:

**"The joyful privilege of dedicating a "House Unto the Lord" is ours today, and as a congregation, we are thankful to Him, who through the years, has thus blessed our collective congregational effort and brought us all into this hour. To His name be the honor and the glory.**

**It is the people of God, who, through Christ Jesus, have made unto Him "living stones" in the great temple of our God — they alone can give life, meaning and form to the temples of worship thus erected and consecrated to the honor and glory of Him who ruleth over all."**

The lot on which the church and parsonage stand measures approximately 90 x 200 feet. The church structure is 101 feet long, with an average width of 40 feet and contains 9000 square feet of usable floor space. Oak, mahogany and birch are used in the sanctuary. The chancel furniture — the altar, baptismal font, pulpit, lectern, and chairs are all finished in mahogany. These were constructed by Albert Mittet, Sr. The pews, organ and pianos are finished in oak. The downstairs kitchen and Sunday school rooms are finished in birch.

November 15, 1959, as we celebrated our 75th anniversary, the new church parsonage was dedicated. This, too, was built by Albert Mittet.

Pastor Storaasli was with us for 15½ years. With his many duties during the building process he, also, conducted services every other Sunday afternoon at the Chinook Lutheran Church, Chinook, Washington, for 10 years. Pastor Storaasli retired in 1963 and since then has lived in Parkland, Washington, where he and Anna are members of Trinity Lutheran Church. On August 5, 1984, the Storaasli's celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in Tacoma.



*Pastor and Mrs. H. Storaasli.*

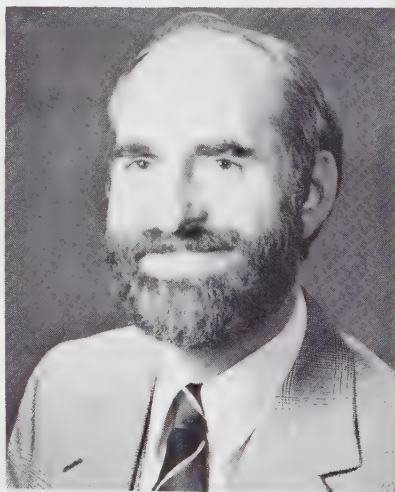


*JoAnn, Lisa, Mark and Ron Berntsen.*

Excerpts from a letter to Dr. Foss for help in a call for a new pastor: "We need a younger man, if possible, as there is much leg work here, and also one who can help with the young people and Sunday School as this area we have not developed as we feel we should. We would also appreciate a man who has some knowledge of music to help with the choir and the congregational singing. Another sphere we need help in is in Stewardship. We are discontinuing bazaars and dinners and the slack will have to be picked up by more direct giving. We need a leader to help set up this program. We are at present emerging from a building program that lasted ten years, and we are not too sure about our future financing."

Our prayers were answered when on Sunday, August 25, 1963, Pastor Ronald Martinson, 28 years old, with his wife, Marilyn and son, Joel, became our parish family. Sara and Anne were born while they lived in Astoria.

Under Pastor Ron's youthful and organized leadership, two years of confirmation instead of one was started, two services each Sunday during the winter months were held, and these practices still continue. He supervised the arrangement for better office facilities and pastor's study. In October, 1964, Donna Holmstedt became our part-time secretary and continues in that position today.



*Pastor Ronald D. Martinson  
1963-1970*



In January 1961, the Berean Circle met for the first time. They studied the Scope Bible lessons on Monday mornings but now meet at 10 a.m. the second Tuesday of each month. The first members were Ella Hill, Lorraine Hoyer, Iva Mae Honcharenko, Margaret Nielsen, Doris Nygaard and Hulda Wrausman.

In 1960-61 the Ladies Aid changed its name to Charity Circle, the Senior Guild to Faith Circle, and Alderbrook Guild to Hope Circle. By 1979, Charity Circle disbanded and the remaining members became a part of Faith Circle. Faith Circle meets at 2 p.m. the second Thursday of each month and Hope Circle meets at 8 p.m. the second Tuesday of each month.

January 11, 1966, a Mothers Circle began meeting 9:30 a.m. on the third Tuesday of each month. In 1967 this group's name was changed to Joy Circle. Carolyn Knapp was chairperson, Anita Englund was secretary-treasurer, Cris Capelli was education secretary and Bonnie Ladd was stewardship chairperson. Baby sitting is provided for their monthly meetings.

A Christian kindergarten was begun with Mrs. Albert (Venus) Luukinen as instructor. This was a five day per week school held in the mornings. Occasionally, girls from the Tongue Point Job Corp helped with rhythm, Spanish, and art.

From the Memorial Fund, a new altar paraments and fixtures were purchased; and a gift of \$1,000 was given to the Pacific Lutheran University Library as a memorial to all who had served the church.

Pastor Martinson enrolled in the Adult Bethel Bible Study program and received the Bethel Study training in Madison, Wisconsin. He recruited ten adults for a two year teacher training period. The minutes of January 19, 1969, state that 57 people had completed the Old and New Testament Bethel Bible Series and 55 had completed Gems of Daily Living. The Bethel program has been offered periodically since that date.

Sunday, September 6, 1970, the congregation said farewell to the Martinson family as they left us to serve Grace Lutheran Church in Salem, Oregon. At present they are serving Central Lutheran Church in Anchorage, Alaska. Pastor Martinson was Vice-president of the North Pacific District of The American Lutheran Church from 1969-1981. He is Interim Administrator for Native Outreach Ministry in Anchorage.



*Picture taken when Marilyn and Ron celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary August 24, 1983. Jon, Sara, Marilyn, Ron, Joel and Anne.*



*John and Donna Holmstedt*

After Pastor Martinson left in September, 1970, John and Donna Holmstedt guided the congregation while we went through the process of calling our new pastor.

The parsonage became alive with young people, music and song when in February, 1971, Pastor Arne Strandjord, Eunice, Peter, Kari, Kristi, Joseph and foster son Jarl, and Loki, the dog, came to serve with us. It has been said that Arne taught us how to show our love and caring, dropping some of the reserve Norwegians are noted for.

Their eldest son, Jonathan, was furthering his education and did not come here to live. March 11, 1979, Jonathan became the only pastor to be ordained at First Lutheran. This was a memorable and inspiring day for all.

Pastor Arne requested two communion services monthly, which is still observed on the first and third Sundays of each month.

The intern program was begun with Rory Scott as our first intern and Cynthia Ganzkow was our intern the following year. These young people and the congregation had challenging years when Pastor Arne became ill and heart surgery became necessary. Other interns were Craig Wanamaker, Jerry Brown, Michael Hansen, and Rich Pearson.

Two groups of Vietnamese refugees were sponsored by the Church. This sponsorship was an excellent learning experience for all of those members who became involved.

Mountain climbing and camping were some of the many activities that the young people and the able-bodied enjoyed under the leadership of Pastor Arne and the interns.

The new individualized confirmation program was introduced. This was thought to put the responsibility on the individual child. Parents were also involved.

Dr. Gerhard Frost and Edna Hong were our Reformation service guests and teachers. The Bethel Bible Study series continued and other adult Bible classes were led by Pastor and lay members.

In 1974 the 90th Anniversary of First Lutheran Church was held with the special offering going to World Hunger.



*Pastors Jonathan and Jeanette Strandjord, Sara and Erica, now serving Five Points Lutheran Church in Blue River, Wisconsin.*



The church rang with the musical talents of the Strandjord family. Eunice was the director of the choir and the cherub choir. The Council minutes of January 15, 1978, included the following: "Pastor threw out some seeds in the form of thoughts about a new pipe organ as the current organ is wearing out and some parts are already gone."



*Front row: Sara, Jonathan, Jennifer, Corey, Kari, Kristi. Middle row: Peter, Joseph. Back row: Jeanette, Galen, Arne, Eunice.*



*Pastor Arne Strandjord  
1971-1979*

October, 1980, Pastor Arne answered the call to serve Messiah Lutheran Church in Vancouver, Washington.



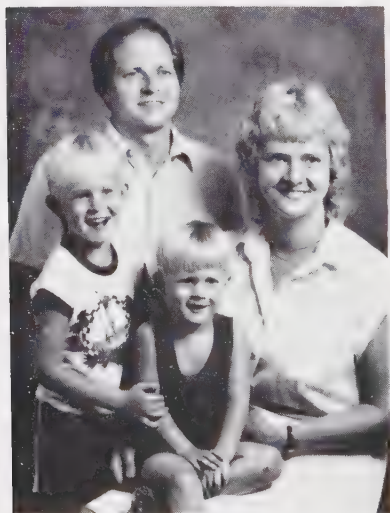
*Rory, Jamie, Wanda and Joshua Scott*

In 1975, we welcomed the first woman Intern in Oregon when Cynthia Ganzkow joined us. Soon after Cyndi's arrival Pastor Arne had heart surgery. She and Steve Wold were married in 1976 and graduated from seminary in 1977. They accepted calls to Bison, South Dakota, and in 1979 became team pastors at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, South Dakota, where Cyndi is still serving.

Pastor Rory Scott was the first of six Interns under Pastor Strandjords' guidance. Following graduation from Luther Seminary, Rory accepted a call to serve as Pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in St. Thomas, North Dakota. He served there until July of 1981 when he then accepted a call to serve as Pastor at Bethesda Lutheran Church in Eugene, Oregon, where he is serving at the present time.



*Cyndi, Emily, Steve and Benjamin Ganzkow-Wold.*



*Nicholas, Craig, Timothy and Kristi Wanamaker.*

Craig Wanamaker and wife, Kristi came to us with many musical talents which they readily shared. Craig formed an Intern Committee to evaluate his sermons and to give other constructive criticism. This committee continued to function as helpers for other Interns who followed. Craig also used puppets to bring the message to the people. After graduating from Luther Seminary in 1978, he served at Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church in Seattle, Washington from 1978-1983. He is presently serving Redeemer Lutheran Church in Woodstock, Illinois.



After graduating from the seminary in 1979, Paula, Nathaniel and Jerry Brown spent the summer in Portland where Jerry completed a course in Clinical Pastoral Education. That summer he received the call to serve Froid and Ebenezer Lutheran Churches located in the rural northeast corner of Montana. He also served as NE Montana Conference President and representative to the Rocky Mountain District Council. He recently accepted a call to be pastor of Family of Christ Lutheran Church, Vancouver, Washington.



*Nathaniel, Paula, Erica, Jerry and Hilary Brown.*



*Bethany, Elaine, Mike and Heidi Hanson.*

The summer of 1974, Richard Pearson worked as a student missionary in Vernon, British Columbia with the North American Indian Mission and the summer of 1977 in LaPaz, Bolivia he worked with the Andes Evangelical Mission. Rich served as our intern in 1979, the year Arne Strandjord accepted a call to Vancouver, Washington and Chester Johnson was called to serve First Lutheran. After ordination in 1981, Rich was called to serve DeSoto-Freeman Lutheran Parish in DeSoto and Ferryville, Wisconsin where he is presently serving.



*Richard, Christopher, Fay, Nathaniel Pearson.*

After Pastor Arne Strandjord accepted the call to Messiah Lutheran Church, Vancouver, Washington, Pastor John Hopp served during the interim period in 1980.

Pastor Chester Johnson had moved to Astoria from Jamestown, North Dakota, to become the Administrator for Clatsop Care and Rehabilitation Center. He served the congregation as interim pastor during the summer. He accepted the call to serve First Lutheran Church and was installed on Sunday, October 5, 1980, by Pastor Theodore Bruechner, Assistant to the Bishop of the North Pacific District. Pastor Chet, Helen, and David became a part of the First Lutheran family.

At the annual meeting on January 18, 1981, Pastor presented possible options to the intern program. At the meeting the congregation voted to change from the intern program to having lay assistants who would help with the youth and the music in the church.



*Pastor Chester Johnson,  
David and Helen.*

Under Pastor Chet's leadership the congregation formed the committee system of lay leadership. Each committee consists of two Council members and up to ten lay members of the congregation. Committees work to help with the overall care of the church under the following titles: (1) Property Management, (2) Parish Education, (3) Worship, (4) Evangelism, (5) Activities, (6) Social Issues Awareness, (7) Personnel. The committee system necessitated a change in the constitution and a new congregational constitution was updated and ratified at the congregational meeting in 1984.

A group of women with small children felt the desire to meet in the evening. Ruth Circle was now added to the group of First Lutheran Church women. Some working women also were interested in an evening Bible study. They meet in their homes on the first Monday of the month. They enjoy good fellowship and support from each other's common problems as well as fulfillment from the Scope Bible Study.





In May, 1981, Becky Leschensky graduated from Luther College with a double major in psychology and religion. She had spent her summers working at various Lutheran Church camps. With this background she soon was very busy as our first lay assistant. Youth activities increased, a singles group was started along with other area churches, and a special World Hunger Awareness program was instituted. She shared her musical abilities and her puppet, Surgery, with all ages.

In 1982, she left for Koinonia, a Lutheran Community in New York where she had a fulltime camping ministry position. She has now completed her first year at Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota where she is working towards her Masters degree in Pastoral Care and Counseling. On September 8th she married Chuck Hoffman whom she had met while serving in Astoria.



*Becky Leschensky*



*Sharon and Paul Sarff.*

Our current lay assistant is Paul Sarff who accepted this position in November, 1982. He has an associate of Arts Degree from Waldorf College and a Bachelors Degree in Accounting and Mathematics from Wartburg College. He worked summers at Green Wing Bible Camp where he met his wife Sharon. He served as Lay Minister at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Merrillville, Indiana. He is actively involved with youth groups, the cherub choir, a guitar class, the confirmation program, and Sunday School program. During the Childrens' sermon his green bag brings forth many interesting objects.

The meaning of Stewardship is well known by a group of our ladies who annually make over one hundred quilts, box hundreds of pounds of men, women and childrens clothing, as well as soap, for World Relief. They have, also, given quilts to boat people and victims of disasters in our local area. These women have work meetings on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

The Luther League has had an organization for many years. Usually this includes all young people fifth grade through high school age. They carry on a study and social program and help with church activities as they are able.

It is with thanks that we include the senior choir in our records. It, too, has functioned almost continuously in providing music for church services and special choral numbers for festive occasions. Mrs. Steve (Laurie) Drage is our present choir director and organist.

From the church records, from 1877 to the present, with only a few lapses where records were not kept, we find the following statistics:

<b>Baptisms</b> .....	<b>1908</b>
<b>Confirmands</b> .....	<b>1067</b>
<b>Couples Married</b> .....	<b>666</b>
<b>Burials</b> .....	<b>1185</b>
<b>Baptized Membership (Sept. 17, 1984)</b> .....	<b>753</b>
<b>Confirmed Membership (Sept. 17, 1984)</b> .....	<b>501</b>

A number of great-grand children of Rev. Emil Christensen have been baptized and confirmed here. Many have called this the church of their families for three quarters of a century or more.

The climax to the Anniversary Year was the celebration banquet, Saturday, September 29, and the Anniversary Service, Sunday, September 30. Bishop Clifford Lunde, President of the North Pacific District, was a special guest for the weekend festivities.

“As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

—Colossians 2:6,7





## 100TH ANNIVERSARY HIGHLIGHTS



















*My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Isaiah 56:7*